

Adventures on LEGO Island

The Backstory

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About 40 zillion years ago, the first kid got the first toy. It was a gift from the toymaker. Fortunately, that first kid was me. Unfortunately, I was all alone. Fortunately, the first toy was a building kit.

The box said LEGO on the top. This was the toymaker's name for "good play." And, dear reader, it was well-named.

Before the toymaker's gift, there was everywhere a vast ocean named the Phanta Sea. I enjoyed tossing around in the Phanta Sea, but I thought it could use an island of stability. So the first thing I built was the Naught Atoll from a few of the bricks in the kit.

It was quite stable and very restful. Maybe too restful. Soon I got the building bug again and I created islands all across the Phanta Sea. When I got hungry, I built the Soup and Sandwich Islands. They have a Pita sandwich to deconstruct for. For dessert, I build a small chain of Islands called Key Lime. If you ever stop there, try the pie -- it's my favorite.

That sated my hunger, but I longed for a place to call home. My dream was to make some friends and play with them. I built a new place and called it LEGO Island, in honor of the toymaker's building it.

I played for a zillion years or so on my island. I had a grand time! I lost myself building castles with moats and drawbridges to span them. I found some animal pieces in the kit and I built horses and dragons. I was becoming a pretty good builder.

But I came to make friends on LEGO Island. And so I did. I made my first friend out of some special LEGO pieces. I made him look just like me, with two shiny legs, fully rotating claws on smooth-swinging arms and a fine swiveling head. He was a great friend. He turned out to be a terrific builder himself, so I called him the Brickster.

I told him all about the island, and since I'd been there a zillion years, there was a lot to say. I was a fountain of data. The Brickster called me the Infomaniac one day, and the name stuck. I thought it was amusing that my own creation would end up naming me. But before the Brickster, there was no reason for me to have a name. In a way, you could say that the Brickster created the Infomaniac! Life's funny, isn't it?

One night, after a fine day of building, dragon-fighting and jousting on LEGO Island, I told the Brickster that I wanted to create another friend, just like him. He was dumbstruck. "Create another friend? Create *another*? Like *you* created *me* ? What nerve! I'm a self-made man! I've been here just as long as you. And, as I recall, *I* named *you*!"

No matter how much evidence I provided, he wouldn't believe that I had built him. And he didn't think we needed anyone else on the island, either. "In fact," he said, "there seems to be too many people on this island already. And one of them thinks he's god!" With that, he strode off in a huff.

I worried about him that evening. On a hunch, I made a dog. I named him Squat, since that's what he did a lot. Just maybe he would alert me to anything untoward.

That night the Brickster stole a good half of my bricks. He would have taken them all, but Squat hollered and scared him away. Got his left claw, too. I was sorry about that -- and even more troubled.

My worries proved to be well-founded. The Brickster created a ragged crew of ruffians with the special people-bricks. He assembled them to be bad, and then steeped them in self-serving lore about the island and me. He told them that *he* had created *me*, of all the ridiculous stories.

He encouraged them to steal bricks whenever they could, saying that I had stolen them from the Brickster. He convinced them that theft was simple justice and turned their world upside down. These guys didn't just *play* brigands, they *were* brigands. They called themselves the Fright Knights.

They kept trying to steal the rest of my bricks, but Squat kept them away. The Brickster, with his creepy new cronies, was becoming stranger by the day. He hated everything, starting with me and including Squat,

music and blue skies. He replaced his claw with one that didn't match and sulked about the injustice of his plight.

I decided that I needed to make some new friends to help me out. First I created the Good Knights to deal with the Brickster's gruesome gang. I created the Flying Legondos, a talented troupe of acrobats that were always helpful to have around -- not to mention fun. I also created the Bobs, a delightful singing family to entertain us and cheer us up.

There were skirmishes for another zillion years between the Good Knights and the Fright Knights, with the occasional dragon thrown in. It was an exciting time, but it was also somewhat scary. We learned a lot.

One day the Brickster built a boat. He sailed around the island and found out there wasn't anything close by. But he thought he saw something in the distance. That encouraged him to build a bigger ship. He cajoled his lazy Knights to build one for him. They did it, but they grumbled the entire time. When it was done, they abandoned their chain mail and armor for sailors garb. They called themselves Pirates.

They sailed the Phanta Sea for days, but couldn't make it to land. Once, they caught a tantalizing glimpse of another island, but they ran out of provisions and had to turn back. The Brickster vowed to find another place - - or to build one, if need be. He wanted off LEGO Island.

One sunny day the Bobs went down to the beach for a picnic. Once there, they found the Brickster and the rest of his pirate crew carousing aboard their ship, the Jolly Dodger. The Brickster was busy counting bricks. The pirates booed the Bobs, but the Bobs stood their ground. "This beach belongs too us as much as you," they said.

"Go away before we bean you with a brick!" shouted the pirates. That gave the Bobs an idea. They spread out and began to sing.

That infuriated the pirates and they threw bricks at the singers. The projectiles fell just shy of the singers, who were standing carefully out of range. The Bobs promptly grabbed the bricks and ran away.

That seemed to be the final straw for the Brickster. The whole island heard him shouting and ranting at his pirates. "You blundering blockheads! You're throwing away our treasure!" He threatened to disassemble them on the spot. That sobered them up. In exasperation, he hoisted anchor and slipped away. He and his pirates went around the island and where their brick-bounty was hidden, and grabbed as many bricks as they could fit aboard.

The Brickster angrily shook his claw at the island. "One day I'll be back for the rest of this treasure and I'll teach that Infomaniac a lesson in humility!" Then they charted a course for the darkest parts of the Phanta Sea and sailed away.

Nobody really missed them, but I was sad. I always hoped that the Brickster would change, but it seems a brick can't change it's color. Now I knew I had lost my friend.

To occupy my mind, I started a rash of new construction. I built the first Information Center to house all the knowledge I had about the island. I built new friends. My friends in turn built new friends. They were like our children, and our families started to grow.

Unbeknownst to us, the Brickster's family was growing too. He and his motley crew had sailed to a spot not too far away from LEGO Island, and constructed their own place. They called it Skull Island. They created new generations of people with the special bricks they had stolen from me. Their creations were mainly pirates, but a few people were decently assembled. They often took off on their own ships to explore the Phanta Sea.

Sometimes they came back to LEGO Island to harass the citizenry and snatch some more bricks. Occasionally we captured some of the brigands. We had built a jail for that very purpose, but it was not our best building, and they always managed to escape.

To help contain this menace to public safety, I created Bat Brick to help hunt down the Brickster whenever he showed up. Bat was our first constable, and he's about as well-assembled as a man can be. He can fight a dragon and rock a baby at the same time. Although Bat really improved the Brickster's arrest rate, our jails still couldn't hold him. Bat's life was definitely on the frustrating side.

Nevertheless, Bat took his job seriously and campaigned tirelessly against poorly assembled philosophies and half-cracked ideas throughout the islands. He won the hearts of LEGO Islanders for his humanitarian leadership. He got us through some rough times, especially the great battle against the glow-ghosts.

He was an enterprising fellow and he took to mapping the island. He knew every knock and cranny like the back of his claw. It was hard to hide from Bat Brick.

Meanwhile, the Brickster kept on building more people. Some of the Brickster's mean creations got out of control and turned on him. They became the most feared people in the Phanta Sea. They defiantly created

their own island, called Head Hunter Island, and woe unto the person who drifted too close. They were fond of ritual disassembly, but delicacy prevents me from going into details.

The Brickster was furious that his creations had gone astray, and led occasional attacks against the Head Hunters. They were invariably messy and indecisive. Head Hunter Island was becoming a repository of people parts.

After sailing around for years, one of the Brickster's ornery descendants came back to LEGO Island. His name was Captain Click and he had a map to the Brickster's secret cache of bricks.

He found the bricks, and took all that his ship's small hold could carry back to Skull Island. Captain Click left his eldest son Mouse in charge of the rest of the treasure. He promised to return for Mouse and the rest of the booty as soon as the winds were favorable. Mouse Click was a shy boy who didn't mind being left alone to guard the loot. He kept to himself on the quiet side of the island. Occasionally, he would peek around a tree and steal a glance at the happy, busy islanders.

After some years of watching the fun on LEGO Island, Mouse decided to join in. He was sure his father had forgotten all about him. Mouse tip-toed over to the town restaurant. The proprietor could instantly see that he was poorly assembled, but that his basic material was sound. He figured he could snap him back into shape, so he fed Mouse and offered him a job. Mouse couldn't believe his good fortune, and he readily agreed. Soon the whole town befriended him.

I let Mouse explore the Information Center. After he discovered the true stories of LEGO Island, he became a new person. He realized that the Brickster had built a wall of lies to separate his family from mine. It was a revelation. Mouse started to question things, and became our first skeptic. Mouse ended up living with me and I treated him like my own son.

Captain Click never came back, but other people from Skull Island came. One ship contained two well-constructed families that had escaped the Pirate syndrome. They were the Roni family and the Brickolini family.

The patriarch of the Roni family was Mac and he was a rugged explorer and trader. His wife Raisa traveled everywhere with him and shared his love of the unknown, if not his tolerance for the uncomfortable. Together they bought and sold cheese, meat and grains around the world.

The Brickolins were perfect travel companions, since they were cooks and gourmets. To them fell the challenge of creating tasty recipes for the

new and aromatic ingredients the Ronis had found. Their sailboat, the Gustatory, smelled delightful when it docked.

Soon, the Ronis opened a store and the Brickolinis put together a restaurant. They were never short of patrons. People came from all directions, bringing new spices and recipes. The world was growing. It was startling to realize how many new islands had been created in the Phanta Sea, some by my progeny and some by the evil genius of the Brickster.

The Ronis and Brickolinis had been on LEGO Island for years when the discovery was made. This discovery changed our world, yet again. It was all Rootin' Tootin's fault. Rootin' Tootin' Roni was the son of Mac and Raisa. He was just a kid and he probably shouldn't have been that far away from home anyway.

It was a good day for a horse ride, and Rootin' Tootin' couldn't resist. He was riding around LEGO Island when his horse tripped over a loose brick. When Rootin' Tootin' examined it, he was astonished to see that it was a gold brick!

Word spread quickly, and soon our quiet island was overrun by cowboys looking for gold. It was quite a scene. Rootin' Tootin' became a cowboy himself. He revamped the store to sell everything a cowboy could need, from hats to spurs.

Prospectors showed up from all points of the compass, and Rootin' Tootin' grew wealthy from the trade. Along with the usual riff-raff, the Brickster came back to haunt us. As usual, he was stealing anything not nailed down. He kept Bat Brick, now the town sherriff, very busy.

Bat already had his claws full with rowdy prospectors carousing around town. Still, he managed to find time to hitch up with Babs Roni. Their honeymoon was less than ideal, however, as the Brickster escaped from jail twice that one night. Bat has never forgiven the Brickster for the interruptions.

Meanwhile, Rootin' Tootin' raised his chubby son Baloni to be a cowboy. Baloni was either the strongest, bravest explorer that ever lived or he was one great story teller. At every town picnic or celebration, there was Baloni Roni telling everyone of his latest adventure. Like the time he escaped from the inside the belly of the world's largest, meanest shark. Or the time he had to swim around the island with only one arm attached. Baloni told some whoppers.

Soon all the gold bricks were found and when diamonds were discovered on another island, the prospectors took off. LEGO Island settled down and

became a little more civilized. It was another great time of building and discovery.

The Brickolinis invented pizza, and that was heralded across the Phanta Sea as a momentous occasion. When they opened their Pizzeria, it was the event of the year and attracted people from all over. Some people brought their own toppings; amazing new pizza combinations were created on the spot. Mama Brickolini played the piano, and Papa spun pizza dough with a flourish. It is still the preferred gathering spot for people in the know about gourmet pizza.

Mouse Click became Professor Click, a respected scientist and inventor. Over the years, he invented all sorts of wondrous things. He invented cars so people could get around faster. Of course, it didn't take too long before people figured out that cars were just plain fun -- even if you didn't get anywhere. Faster than you can click two bricks together, people on LEGO Island built a track just to race cars around. The racetrack became a popular attraction, and people came from all corners to watch the races.

The Brickster, unfortunately, was among that crowd. He was up to his usual skulduggery. Most of his gang had long ago mutinied, so he usually came alone. Sometimes we captured him and put him in our new jail, but we could never keep him for long.

Bat Brick, the town Constable, and his wife Babs, created little Nick and Nora, who would soon grow up to be super-cops. Babe also found time to put a little more fun into LEGO Island. She started the first parade, the first town picnic and the first town dance. She loved everyone on the Island, a trait that she built into Nora as well.

But even with the help of Nick and Nora, the Brickster was still hard to keep pinned down. He was the master of deconstruction and nothing could hold him.

No matter. Even with the Brickster's destructive hi-jinx, we always have fun on LEGO Island.

Based on the success of his race cars, Professor Click invented a vehicle for the water called a jet-ski. Not surprisingly, jet-skiing became another hit sport that attracted fanatical crowds of onlookers and participants. LEGO Island was getting more fun all the time.

Life was not without its sad moments. Baloni Roni got lost on a jet-ski one day and strayed too close to Head Hunter Island. He's never been seen since, and everyone suspects the worst. He left behind Pepper, a sweet-faced orphan. The Brickolinis adopted him and he has been happily delivering

pizzas ever since. Partly because of his tragic past, but also because of his keen mind and good nature, Pepper is a favorite on LEGO Island.

Pepper adores Nick and Nora. Nick likes the kid, but sometimes is a little too wrapped up in his job to pay attention. Nora, on the other hand, is never too busy for Pepper. She involves him in her police work, and Pepper is always learning new things.

The Brickolinis are thrilled to have Pepper as their own, but you might not know it from Papa's attitude some days. He comes down a bit hard on the kid, but it's only because he wants to bring out his best. Mama, however, has unreserved love for the little rascal and wants to smother him in hugs. Sometimes, he lets her.

That brings my story up to the present. The rest of my tale wanders into the future. But I'll save that for another rainy day.